

told by Ezra. We have here a correct delineation of Persian court life in the time of Xerxes (486-465 B.C.). The dethronement of Vashti, the elevation of Esther, the counteraction of Haman's plot with his overthrow, the institution of Purim, and the increasing fame of the persecuted Mordecai, are thrillingly depicted.

REVIEW.

STUDY SECTION—Acts 7: 1-53—*Stephen's Defense from History.*

FIRST QUARTER.

LESSON XIII.

In the past twelve lessons we have sketched the first seventeen books of the Bible and the first thirty-five centuries of history.

1. *The Literature.*—In these historical books is embodied nearly 60 per cent of the matter in the Old Testament. They also include the entire period of Old Testament history, though the time covered in the first book is longer than that embraced in all the other books combined. The principal known authors were Moses and Ezra, though authorship of some anonymous books has been ascribed to Joshua, Samuel, Jeremiah, Mordecai, and others. The five books of Moses date from the Wilderness Wandering; Joshua, Judges, and Ruth appeared soon after the occurrence of the events they record; the books of Samuel were published not long after the Disruption; Kings and Chronicles were produced during the Captivity; Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther belong to the period of the Restoration. All except the last were written in or near Palestine. It has been observed that they contain two distinct historical series: (1) in the books from Genesis to Kings the story extends from Creation to the release of Jehoiachin in Babylon 562 B.C.; (2) and in the remaining four books, the history is traced genealogically to Adam and onward to the second visit of Nehemiah to Jerusalem in 432 B.C.